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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed the effects of different teacher education programs on students' attitudes about classroom management, student trust, and teacher discipline. Data was collected from 81 preservice elementary education majors who were participating in three different teacher education programs. Eight factors were used as the basis for attitude analysis: (1) societal and social influences on discipline; (2) student responsibilities in school; (3) influences on disciplinary options; (4) teacher respect and order; (5) student classroom behavior; (6) school rules enforcement; (7) student punishment; and (8) teacher preparation and planning. The programs differed in the amount of field experience and the types of classroom settings for the field experiences. Beliefs of students in the program with the least amount of field experience changed the most, in a student centered direction. Beliefs of students in the other two programs became more custodial on many of the factors analyzed. The results indicate that total attitude structure about global topics such as management, discipline, and trust differ, and that there may not be one "best" teacher education program. Careful consideration must be given to students' prior attitudes and attitude structures when changes in teacher education programs are planned. (Authors/JD)

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# Alternative Teacher Education Programs: Their Effect on Selected Students' Attitudes

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ABSTRACT

Alternative Teacher Education Programs:

Their Effect on Selected Students' Attitudes

This study analyzed the effects alternative teacher education programs have on students' attitudes about classroom management, student trust, and teacher discipline. Pre-service elementary education students participated in three alternative teacher education programs. The programs differed in the amount of field experiences and the types of classroom settings for the field experiences. Students in the program with the least amount of field experiences beliefs changed the most. This was in a student centered direction. Students in the other two programs beliefs became more custodial on many of the factors analyzed. These results show students are differentially affected by alternative programs. They also indicate that total attitude structure about global topics such as management, discipline, and trust differ. Therefore, careful consideration must be given to students' prior attitudes and attitude structure when alternative teacher education programs are developed.

# Alternative Teacher Education Programs: Their Effect on Selected Students' Attitudes

There are numerous kinds of teacher education programs in existence today. These program generally differ in types of courses which students must complete and in variety and amount of field experiences offered students. Overall the teacher education programs are created and maintained on the assumption that the experiences provided pre-service teachers contribute to the creation of an effective, efficient teacher. But there are many critics of today's programs. Zeichner (1980) has recently pointed out the myths and realities related to field-based experiences in teacher education. Other critics (Silberman, 1971; Broudy, 1967; Haynes and Coyne, 1972) have previously argued that teacher education programs need a vast overhaul before they can deal effectively with the problem of educating teachers in a manner consistent with today's student's needs. They reason that if existing programs were adequate, teachers would be performing more effectively in the various roles assigned to them in the classroom. Consequently, new or different teacher education programs continue to be created and totally implemented. Various lists of teacher education skills and/or competencies are continually defined, revised, or updated. However, even though literally thousands of studies have been done on the many facets of teacher effectiveness, few have been able to satisfactorily identify what types of teacher education programs produce effective teachers.

Since there still is a lack of supportive research evidence that indicates that one teacher education program is optimal for all students, it seems reasonable to suggest that perhaps differing programs should be devised for various groups of students. Many researchers have noted that no single instructional process is optimal for all students (Glaser, 1968;

Cronbach and Snow, 1977). The matching of instructional methods to students' aptitudes is the general area of aptitude-treatment-interaction research. However, this area of research has generally not been applied to overall teacher education programs. A possible reason for this may be the difficulty in identifying aptitudes and attitudes that may react differentially with differing teacher education instructional programs.

Previous experiences with optional teacher education programs have led many to suspect that some similarities exist among the students who select the same optional program. This suspicion has directed attention to not only the results of an educational experience, but to the attitude people bring to educational experiences. It is believed that if those students who choose a particular program share some common attributes or attitudes, it is imperative for effective learning to know what are those commonalities and how might they affect learning.

Among the areas of major concern to elementary pre-service teachers are attitudes and beliefs about classroom management, control, and discipline. Wiggins (1974) studied beliefs of elementary classroom teachers in these areas. She outlined statements that differentiated between elementary teachers with differing philosophical viewpoints. A study by Horak and Roubinek (1980) investigated the attitude structure of pre-service teachers as it pertained to these areas. In that study, eight factors were delineated that pertained to different attitudes and beliefs about classroom management, student trust, and teacher discipline. This study analyzed the effects alternative teacher education programs have on the previously reported groups of attitudes.

## Procedures

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to determine if students who completed alternative teacher education programs hold dissimilar beliefs

about teaching. The study was concerned with attitudes about classroom management, student trust, and teacher discipline. It was felt that many student's attitudes in these areas were formed during the participation in each alternative program. Thus, the programs should differentially affect the attitudes in these areas.

Instrument: The instrument utilized was the PMT Questionnaire (Wiggins, 1974). It exhibits construct validity based upon scale construction and the predictive results of Wiggins' prior study. It has also been shown to possess split half reliability of 0.91 based upon large samples of in-service elementary teachers. This instrument is a 57 item Likert type response scale. The students rate the items on a 5 point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The PMT Questionnaire possesses three subscales each consisting of 27 items which tap the domain of teachers' attitudes about classroom management and control, use of punishment in the classroom, and trust of students. Higher scores on this instrument indicate a belief that the function of schools is to create an environment which fosters student autonomy. The teacher's role is one of a facilitator and guide instead of a dispenser of knowledge. Since the PMT Questionnaire is unpublished, a brief description of the eight factors identified in the previously cited study follow:

Factor 1: "Societal and Social Influences on Discipline." Sample item, "Children who come from poverty areas often exhibit more disciplinary problems than children from middle-class areas."

Factor 2: "Student Responsibilities in School." Sample item, "Students should be permitted to choose their own seating arrangement."

Factor 3: "Influences on Disciplinary Options." Sample item, "Punishment for girls tends to be less severe than boys for the same offense."

Factor 4: "Teacher Respect and Order." Sample item, "A successful teacher treats all children alike."

Factor 5: "Student Classroom Behavior." Sample item, "Teachers who permit a lot of student interactions and movement do not have good classroom control."

Factor 6: "School Rules Enforcement." Sample item, "A teacher usually takes a student with a discipline problem to the principal and expects him to be the disciplinarian."

Factor 7: "Student Punishment." Sample item, "Keeping students after school is an acceptable form of punishment."

Factor 8: "Teacher Preparation and Planning." Sample item, "Group planning sessions are more successful when the teacher is involved."

Design: A non-randomized control group pre-posttest design was used in this study (Ary, Jacobs, and Razovieh, 1972, p. 254.) Since randomization was not possible, a pretest of the PMT Questionnaire was administered during the first class meeting. The pretest score was utilized as a covariate on the PMT Questionnaire posttest score. Since randomization was not possible, the study may be limited by the fact that specific selection differences may have resulted in an interaction effect between selection and certain other extraneous variables not assessed.

Sample: The students who participated in the study were preservice elementary education majors. Data was collected from 81 students who were enrolled in three alternative teacher education programs. All of the students were seniors and were enrolled in a minimum of 15 units of elementary education method courses.

Treatments: The treatment group consisted of three alternative teacher education programs. The alternatives were differentiated by the amount

of time spent on field based and on-campus experiences. They were also differentiated by the school setting. One program, called the open education program, consisted of field experiences in selected team-taught classroom settings. Students spent approximately one-half of their time on participating in field experiences. A second program, called the self-contained-classroom program, consisted of field experiences in selected one-teacher classroom settings. Students spent approximately one-fourth of their time participating in field experiences. The third program, called the on-campus program, consisted of the traditional option where courses utilized very few supervised field experiences. All instruction was conducted in the university setting.

Statistical Analysis: Data were analyzed using analysis of covariance procedures. Since the students were not randomly assigned to programs, the pretest scores on the PMT Questionnaire were used as a covariate. Thus, differences in attitudes about classroom management, discipline, and trust that were formed prior to participation in the alternative teacher education programs were covaried out during the statistical analysis. These procedures through a purely statistical control secure the same precision in the evaluation of the treatment effect as experimentally controlling the analyzed factor (Lindquist, 1953).

Results: Pre and posttest means and standard deviations were computed for the eight factor variables in the study. They are presented in table 1.

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Insert Table 1 About Here

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Results of the analysis of covariance procedures with the pretest used as a covariate indicated there were significant main effects for five of the eight factors. These were factors F2, F4, F5, F7, and F8.

Table 2 reports the data analysis pertinent to these results.

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Insert Table 2 About Here

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When the pretest scores were covaried out, the students in the on-campus program and the open-education program formed a homogenous subset. Their beliefs were significantly different than the beliefs of students in the self-contained-classroom program on all five factors. Students in the self-contained-classroom program consistently had more constraining views about classroom discipline, student trust, and teacher control.

Additional post-hoc analysis of the data revealed that the pretest to posttest scores had changed the most for the on-campus program. T-test analysis of the data showed the on-campus program students' beliefs changed signigicantly ($p < .05$) on factors F2, F4, F5, and F7. Open-education program students' beliefs changed significantly ($p < .05$) only for factor F8. Self-contained-classroom program students' beliefs changed significantly ($p < .05$) only for Factor 5. For the on-campus program and the open-education program all beliefs or attitudes became less constraining or custodial while for the self-contained-classroom program they became more constraining or custordial.

## Discussion

Overall, this study revealed that in general beliefs and attitudes of preservice elementary teachers are affected by alternative teacher education programs. It also showed that the broad area of classroom management/control and discipline needs to be more explicitly defined in many research studies. The eight factors analyzed in this study had mean responses on the factors ranging from 2.87 to 3.96 on a five point scale. For the on-campus program students' attitudes became more similar on all but Factor 3 which concerns sociological influences on

disciplinary options. They also became less custodial in their veiws on seven of the eight factors. For the open-education program and the self-contained-classroom program there were no discernable trends in solidification of beliefs. The means and standard deviations increased on some factors and decreased on other factors.

This research study attempted to identify beliefs that would prove potentially useful for identifying students who might benefit most from alternative teacher education programs. As observed by Zeichner (1980) this is a very complex problem. The "liberal" affect of campus programs discussed by Zeichner is apparent in this study. As previously stated on-campus program students' veiwpoints became less custodial on all eight of the factors and significantly less custodial on four of the factors. This was not true for the other two alternative teacher education programs.

The results of this study also indicate that the socialization effect of field experience varies greatly among students. This is true regardless of beliefs and attitudes held by students prior to their participation in the field experiences programs. For these programs, students had the choice of which option to select. As expected, beliefs of students in the open-education program were initially more student oriented than beliefs of students in the other two programs. This was true for all the factors except the one which dealt with societal and social influences on discipline. They initially felt there were more school constraints in this area than did other students. However, their views became more diverse after the teacher education program experience. Many students became more teacher dominant in their attitudes. The same is true for the self-contained-classroom program. Overall views became more humanistic on only one of the eight factors. In many instances, the consequences of the programs were in conflict with the types of

attitudes they were intended to promote.

The eight factors relating to beliefs about teacher discipline, classroom management, and student trust studied need to be addressed differentailly in the alternative teacher education analyzed. This is especially true of programs where field experiences are integral parts of the overall program. Students in open-education programs need to deal more in depth with attitudes and realitites about societal and social influences on discipline and school rules enforcement. Students in self-contained-classroom programs need to deal more in-depth with student responsibilities in school, societal and social influences on discipline, student classroom behavior, and teacher preparation and planning. Devoting more time to these specific topics is certainly a necessity for at least the programs which were the focus of this research study.

Lastly, due to these ofttimes conflicting results it now appears that aptitude-treatment-interaction procedures need to be utilized more generally when studying the effects of alternative teacher education programs. More ethnographic or case study type research may also help to identify and clarify the aptitudes and attitudes that are most important. In reality, there may not be one "best" teacher education program. Differing programs may have to be devised and implemented that best meet the individual differences of various groups of students. Through this approach the experiences of the total program may more reliably contribute to the development of more effective, thoughtful, and concerned teachers.

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations for Groups on 8 Factors

| Factor | | Open-mode[1] Mean | S.D. | Self-Contained Mode[2] Mean | S.D. | On-Campus Mode[3] Mean | S.D. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | pretest | 13.07 | 1.65 | 13.74 | 2.05 | 13.30 | 1.76 |
| | posttest | 13.07 | 1.74 | 13.48 | 2.21 | 13.65 | 1.23 |
| 2 | pretest | 15.21 | 2.44 | 13.67 | 1.71 | 12.76 | 2.50 |
| | posttest | 15.71 | 1.35 | 13.37 | 1.64 | 14.31 | 2.04 |
| 3 | pretest | 19.64 | 2.89 | 17.33 | 2.25 | 17.62 | 2.39 |
| | posttest | 19.85 | 2.49 | 18.67 | 3.16 | 18.23 | 3.36 |
| 4 | pretest | 11.35 | 2.33 | 9.48 | 2.24 | 11.00 | 2.15 |
| | post test | 12.21 | 2.47 | 10.00 | 1.82 | 12.50 | 2.06 |
| 5 | pretest | 36.00 | 3.22 | 34.70 | 3.68 | 34.85 | 3.66 |
| | posttest | 37.43 | 2.30 | 32.81 | 2.92 | 36.54 | 2.08 |
| 6 | pretest | 10.64 | 1.42 | 8.85 | 1.46 | 9.00 | 2.26 |
| | posttest | 10.14 | 1.58 | 9.67 | 1.98 | 9.69 | 1.85 |
| 7 | pretest | 26.21 | 3.53 | 25.00 | 3.71 | 24.46 | 2.58 |
| | posttest | 27.57 | 2.60 | 25.11 | 2.95 | 27.00 | 3.72 |
| 8 | pretest | 15.29 | 2.12 | 14.70 | 1.61 | 14.85 | 2.40 |
| | posttest | 16.79 | 1.34 | 14.04 | 1.85 | 15.69 | 2.36 |

1. n = 28

2. n = 27

3. n = 26

Table 2

Analysis of Covariance Summary Table for 8 Factors

| Source of Variation | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Probability |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Factor 1 | | | |
| Covariate | 19.48 | 1 | 19.48 | 6.45 | .013 |
| Main Effects | | | | | |
| Group | 3.76 | 2 | 1.88 | .622 | .539 |
| Residual | 232.41 | 77 | 3.02 | | |
| Total | 255.65 | 80 | 3.19 | | |
| | | Factor 2 | | | |
| Covariate | 32.68 | 1 | 32.68 | 11.74 | .001 |
| Main Effects | | | | | |
| Group | 46.52 | 2 | 23.26 | 8.36 | .001 |
| Residual | 214.36 | 77 | 2.79 | | |
| Total | 293.56 | 80 | 3.67 | | |
| | | Factor 3 | | | |
| Covariate | 180.33 | 1 | 180.33 | 26.08 | .001 |
| Main Effects | | | | | |
| Group | 1.28 | 2 | .638 | .092 | .912 |
| Residual | 532.39 | 77 | 6.91 | | |
| Total | 714.00 | 80 | 8.93 | | |
| | | Factor 4 | | | |
| Covariate | 188.36 | 1 | 188.36 | 61.05 | .001 |
| Main Effects | | | | | |
| Group | 24.31 | 2 | 12.15 | 3.94 | .023 |
| Residual | 237.55 | 77 | 3.08 | | |
| Total | 450.22 | 80 | 5.61 | | |

Table 2 (continued)

Analysis of Covariance Summary Table for 8 Factors

| Source of Variation | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Probability |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Factor 5 | | | |
| Covariate | 49.07 | 1 | 49.07 | 7.57 | .007 |
| Main Effects | | | | | |
| Group | 300.68 | 2 | 150.34 | 23.19 | .001 |
| Residual | 499.14 | 77 | 6.48 | | |
| Total | 848.89 | 80 | 10.61 | | |
| | | Factor 6 | | | |
| Covariate | 37.90 | 1 | 37.80 | 13.82 | .001 |
| Main Effects | | | | | |
| Group | 1.50 | 2 | .75 | .27 | .762 |
| Residual | 211.15 | 77 | 2.74 | | |
| Total | 250.54 | 80 | 3.13 | | |
| | | Factor 7 | | | |
| Covariate | 133.94 | 1 | 133.94 | 15.70 | .001 |
| Main Effects | | | | | |
| Group | 54.79 | 2 | 27.40 | 3.21 | .046 |
| Residual | 657.00 | 77 | 8.53 | | |
| Total | 845.73 | 80 | 10.57 | | |
| | | Factor 8 | | | |
| Covariate | 72.48 | 1 | 72.48 | 21.77 | .001 |
| Main Effects | | | | | |
| Group | 45.87 | 2 | 22.94 | 6.89 | .002 |
| Residual | 256.34 | 77 | 3.33 | | |
| Total | 374.69 | 80 | 4.68 | | |

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